

# The Framingham Circuit

Newsletter of the Framingham Amateur Radio Association June 1998, Vol. 65, No. 6

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## President's Message

You know what they say, that "time flies when you're having fun". It's hard for me to believe that a year has gone by since I wrote my first President's Message in the Circuit. It's also hard for me to believe that I have been a FARA officer for four years. So, I figure it's time for me to sit back down in the audience as a regular member and tell the new officers what they 'gotta do. What made the officers' jobs easy are all the FARA members who just step up to the plate and get the job done, no matter what job it is, without ever being asked. No question that FARA's greatest assets are its members.

And with regards to officers, FARA elections are on the top of the June regular meeting agenda for Thursday June 4 at the usual time, 7:30 PM, at the club shack in the Danforth Building. The nominating committee has diligently done their job of coming up with a stellar slate of candidates. Please show your support of FARA by showing up at the June meeting and voting.

And finally, FARA's most participated in annual event is rapidly approaching - FIELD DAY! There is no other event during the year that brings as many club members together at one time as Field Day. Food, radio, food, good company, food, great discussions, food - you know the routine.

Thanks to everyone for making my time as a FARA officer enjoyable, rewarding, and memorable. See you at the shack. 73. (Hey Pete, you know what you gotta do...). 73

## Thursday, June 4 This Month's Meeting

Marjie, KA1HIA

This month's meeting will feature Rob Macedo, KD1CY, head of the Massachusetts Skywarn net. Rob will be talking about Skywarn and weather spotting. This should be a good follow up to last month's weather training.

## Submitting Material to the Circuit

Material may be submitted for publication by sending it directly to the editor. This can be done by phone, by US Mail, or via the Internet (preferred). The deadline for each issue is the Thursday, one week before the monthly meeting.

### by phone

(508) 425-2055 (before 9:00PM please!)

### by mail

Robert Hesse, NIUVA  
1 Cold Spring Brook Road  
Hopkinton, MA 01748

### by internet

[niuva@ultranet.com](mailto:niuva@ultranet.com)

Jim, W1EQW

## Field Day Preparations

by Dave Hoaglin, K1HT

Your officers and a few others have been hard at work, preparing our equipment for Field Day. Each Wednesday evening and Saturday morning the shack is a beehive of activity. Here are some of the highlights.

Paul N1DGT has checked over a number of computers and monitors that Steve AA1IZ has been storing for shipment to Grenada (thanks, Steve!). There seem to be enough good 386s to equip our stations, with a spare or two.

Pete KA1AXY is leading the effort to "connectorize" all the rotators and control boxes, with a pigtail on each. Then the cables will be interchangeable, and matching control boxes and rotators will be color coded (Along the way, we'll make sure they all work!)

Bev N1LCO and I have inventoried the tower ropes and bundled (or rebundled) them into sets. Each set contains all the ropes needed for a particular tower.

We have purchased the necessary hardware to refurbish the 6-element 6-meter beam that Spencer N1JWB donated to the Club last fall. George N1XAN has started assembling the antenna.

Pete KA1AXY and others have fabricated new heavy-duty power cables. We've made progress on lining up generators to connect them to, and we hope to firm up these arrangements soon.

Dick K1KTK has contacted the National Guard with our request to borrow tents and tables. Everything seems to be on track.

Jim W1EQW and I have inventoried the tower sections. We have enough — once we repair and adjust about half a dozen.

As you can see, a lot has been happening. But much remains, if we're going to be ready on schedule. For

*[Continued on page 3]*

**QRPTTF 1998 -  
Run for the Borders**  
by Peter, KA1AXY

Every spring, the Northern California QRP club holds a contest, called QRP to the Field, or QRPTTF. Each year, for fun, the organizer, Joe Gervais, AB7TT, chooses a theme. Contesters choose an operating site that fits (sometimes very creatively) in with the theme. This year's theme was "Run for the Borders", and your contest score was multiplied by the number of borders intersecting at your chosen operating location.

Now, QRP contests aren't like normal contests, and NorCal contests are even less like normal contests. NorCal is a club with no officers, no meetings and no dues. A couple of guys put out a magazine four times a year, and if you want, you can send them some money and they will put you on the subscription list. I joined NorCal after finding out about it on the internet QRP-L mailing list, where all the really cool QRPerers hang out :). So I knew that this was going to be a fun, laid back contest, where the main goal was to have fun and come back with a good story to tell. So, anyway, last year I decided to try operating in QRPTTF, and I had so much fun, I did it again this year. The first problem was to choose a site. It had to be relatively easy to get to, since I wanted to drive most of the way and hike in with my gear. I got out the map and looked for nearby state border intersections. Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island looked promising, and the two New York/Massachusetts corners also looked like possibilities. All three points appeared to be relatively easily accessible, and on public land.

On my way back from the New England QRP club meeting at ARRL last month, I took a small detour to go check out my proposed operating position. I was armed with my GPS (thanks, Anne) and a topographic map. According to the map, all I had to do (!) was park in East Thompson, and walk down an abandoned railbed then bushwhack about a quarter of a mile to the border point. I found the railbed and, with GPS in hand, started walking. When the GPS told me the border point was 90 degrees to the right of the railbed, I started looking for a trail (or at least an easy way to get there). Sure enough, a trail appeared, and it led right to the four foot granite pillar

with MASS, CONN and RI and the date 1883 carved on it. There were plenty of trees for antenna supports, and a nice flat area to set up my station. I would have to backpack my gear about three quarters of a mile from the road. QRPTTF 98 was held on April 25th, and it was a cool, breezy day. As it turned out, a bit too cool and breezy, because you get very cold, just sitting in a chair trying to copy CW! I had packed up the night before, loaded the car, and then decided to do some last-minute tasks that made the whole expedition go much easier. The first thing I did was to finally finish my "antenne shooter", which is a slingshot with a fishing reel attached to the front. It's designed to shoot a 3 ounce sinker over a tree, which makes setting up antennas very pleasant. The second thing I did was to cut a backup dipole from 14 gauge insulated wire and crimp some ring terminals on the ends so I could try out my new antenna center unit.

I arrived at the site at about 10:30, thinking that I had plenty of time before the contest started. I used that time well, breaking my light duty dipole trying to get it into the tree. The heavy duty one



*Well, the masked ham is none other than Pete, KA1AXY*

went up just fine, and I configured it as an inverted V, with one end in RI, the other in CT and the apex in MA. I would be able to claim operation from all three states! Antenna up, 30 minutes to go until the opening bell, and it was time to set up the rest of the station (hoping that those dark clouds would leave).

My operating position was a beach chair, with a plywood surface clamped across the arms with Vise-Grips (the Vise Grips were about half the weight of my pack!). I used my 40 meter NorCal SST rig, a 2 watt CW transceiver with a VXO, which is about the size of an old radar detector. My keyer was a Heath capacitive paddle

memory keyer. I used my trusty (but somewhat large) MFJ 941 tuner and a 7 amp-hour gel cell for power.

I worked 10 stations, mostly in the mid-Atlantic states and Michigan. Although people said 40 was dead, if I could hear them, I could work them. I was having so much fun working all these people and handing out contacts, that I forgot to log the RST I gave out! After about 3 hours, I was getting cold, and thinking of heading home, when down the trail came W1RH and the whole Hess clan, complete with camera to preserve the memories! We spent about a half hour, with me posing for photos and giving tours.

When the Hesses left, I decided I'd worked all the stations I wanted to work, and started to pack up. Everything fit back into my pack, and I hiked out to my car, having had a great time out in the woods, playing radio. I was home by 5, just in time to have pizza with Cathy and the kids, who had gone hiking with friends in the same general area.

QRP-L list info:  
send email to: [listserv@lehigh.edu](mailto:listserv@lehigh.edu)

NorCal web page:  
<http://www.fix.net/~jparker/norcal.html>

QRP-L web page:  
<http://qrp.cc.nd.edu/qrp-l/>



*Here is the Connecticut side of the marker. [More pictures of Pete's adventure can be found in this month's newsletter on the FARA web site.](#)*

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example, we still have several antennas to check out. The final two planning meetings are on June 3 and June 17 (7:30 p.m.), but we'll be at the shack most Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings between now and Field Day. If all goes well, we'll be ready to start setting up on Friday afternoon, June 26. We'll need lots of people then, and again on Sunday afternoon to take everything down. Please plan to be there. We'll need several step ladders to help support towers as we prepare to raise them. If you can bring one, please let me know. Finally, despite all this focus on logistics, Field Day is an operating event! Before long I'll be working on the operating schedule. If you want to participate, please let me know (978-443-3603).

#### Director of Food Seeks Help

by Dick, K1KTK and Marsha, K1NGI  
Directors of Food

As many of you may know, Marsha K1NGI and I have sold our house and purchased a condo in Marlboro. Don't worry though as we have no plans to leave FARA and join Algonquin ARA!!!

Our move is currently planned for the 22nd or 23rd of June, just days before Field Day. This puts a squeeze on us for the Field Day Food.

We are seeking a few individuals who could help out with the food on Field Day. This would include three Saturday meals and two Sunday meals. We should be able to handle the shopping as well as get the chili prepared. Perhaps someone who is familiar with food smoking could man the smokers on Saturday so we could have chicken and ribs for dinner.

I would suggest that Friday night supper be on an individual basis as we've done in previous years unless someone would volunteer to put on the Friday Night Cookout (Hamburgs, Hot Dogs, potato salad, cole slaw, chips, etc.).

#### Membership Dues

Annual membership dues are as follows: (Make checks payable to FARA)  
Regular FARA \$10  
Student / Retired \$5  
Repeater (voluntary) \$10

I am asking McDonalds on Route 30 for punch and coffee again this year. We would get the coffee on Saturday morning. Perhaps we could purchase Egg McMuffins on an individual basis when we get the coffee, etc, instead of fussing otherwise (which would make things easier). If not, Saturday breakfast could consist of bagels, cream cheese, and to make things simple this year, cereal. Of course, donuts always show up!!

Lunch on both Saturday and Sunday is make your own sandwiches, potato salad, cole slaw, chips, and for those brave enough, chile. Hopefully donations of desserts will show up for lunch and dinner as they always have in the past. Don't forget that Gerard's Ice Cream stand will be open and we would like the club to patronize them.

Dinner on Saturday is planned to be chicken and ribs, made by FARA. Gerard's Bar-B-Que is no longer in operation as David decided to retire, again!! I figure we could pre-cook the chicken and ribs and finish them in the smoker.

We are planning to give our daughter the refrigerator when we move but we will keep it at the Framingham house until the day after Field Day so we will have a place to keep things cold. Our son-in-law will pick it up on Monday.

As usual, we are looking for coolers to borrow. Please mark your cooler so we know who it goes back to on Sunday. Saturday morning we will need some people to pickup the ice. I have requested that the Sheraton Tara provide us with ice as they have in years past. I've also asked Poland Spring for their usual water donation and that will have to be picked up on Friday afternoon.

Please give us a call at (508) 877-0563 and let us know that you will be part of the team. We'll give you ample directions on what needs to be done! No experience necessary!! Thanks in advance.

#### QSL Card

Submitted by Rich, W1EK



Out of all the cards, I have received, mine still has special meaning. It was the night after my 6th wedding anniversary. A sacrifice my wife made for me, to let me go on XROY while she stayed home. Captain Manzel, had just found out and shared with me, that tonight was also special, for he recently had found out that his wife was pregnant, after the doctors said that could not happen. He attributed the success, to the magic of Easter Island.

If you would like to share your favorite QSL card, which could be your own, with the club, please send it my way! A caption or story would be appreciated also.

In the coming months look for cards from Paul, N1VAM and Bob, W1RH

## Swap Board

New Adelpha Delta B Sloper \$50

Spider Mobile Antenna 10 20 & 40  
\$90

Yaesu E-DC-5 12Voh Adapter \$15

Eight RG8U & Six RG58 Cables  
various lengths all with connectors  
\$30

Hal, WN1TKD (781) 440-9708

#### FARA Horizons

Jun 3: Field Day Planning  
Jun 4: Monthly Meeting  
Jun 17: Field Day Planning  
May 22: Board Meeting  
Jun 26-28: Field Day

## Other pictures of Pete, the monument and the Editor

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